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SOCIETY PROCEEDINGS

THE HELMINTHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

The twenty-second regular meeting of the society was held at the residence of Mr. Hall on October 29, Mr. Hall acting as host. The evening was devoted to an informal discussion of zoological and medical topics.

MAURICE C. HALL, *Secretary*.

The twenty-third regular meeting of the society was held at the residence of Dr. Pfender on December 17, 1914, Dr. Pfender acting as host and Dr. Stiles as chairman.

Dr. Sweet was elected a foreign corresponding member of the society.

Dr. Ransom presented a paper by Ransom and Hall, entitled *The Life History of Gongylonema scutatum*. Encysted larval nematodes were found by the senior author in the body cavity of *Aphodius femoralis*, *A. granarius*, *A. fime-tarius*, and *Onthophagus hecate* at Bethesda, Maryland. Certain morphological characters suggested the possibility that they were the larvae of *Gongylonema*. Furthermore, dissections of larval beetles of these and related species disclosed the presence of free nematode embryos which agreed exactly with embryos taken from the eggs of *Gongylonema scutatum*. Nematode larvae similar to those discovered at Bethesda were found in *Aphodius coloradensis*, *A. vittatus*, and *A. granarius* in El Paso County, Colorado. The feeding of these larvae to sheep resulted in infestations with *G. scutatum*. Eggs of *G. scutatum* were fed to *Aphodius* spp. and to Croton bugs, *Ectobia germanica*. In the course of two days free embryos of *G. scutatum* were recovered from the insects; later, other stages were found, and at the end of a month the final encysted larval stage was present. Small dung beetles belonging to the genus *Aphodius*, appear to be the most common hosts.

Dr. Cobb presented a very unusual note, dealing with a new species of free-living nematode, which has been made the subject of some experiments and observations arising from the presence in its intestinal cells of the substance rhabditiin, described in a former paper presented before the society. It has been found possible to rear several successive generations of this nematode on agar made up with only those traces of nitrogen contained in tap water and "pure" agar. Simultaneously it has been determined that the nematode is aerophagous, and Dr. Cobb exhibited to the society a preparation in which the living nematode was shown actively ingesting air. The nematode can take in its own volume of air in the course of an hour or two, the air passing into the esophagus being visible as bubbles taken in at the surface of the nutrient medium, to which the nematodes resort from time to time. This ingested air may be followed as it passes quickly through the esophagus and as far as the anterior portion of the intestine where it is rapidly and completely absorbed, each bubble of air as it reaches the intestine requiring only two to three seconds for its absorption. The obvious conclusion suggested by the development of several generations of this nematode on a "nitrogen-free" medium and its habit of swallowing air, is that the nematode, among other things, has the power of fixing atmospheric nitrogen. The cultures were not free from bacterial contamination, though the contamination was not heavy; it was possible by frequent transfers of the nematode to keep them in relatively pure media. The most significant feature of the observations is the undoubted ingestion and absorption of relatively large quantities of nitrogen. The development of the nematode under the conditions named does not appear to reduce very materially the amount of rhabditiin.

Dr. Cobb also exhibited to the society some mounts of free-living nematodes, showing elaborate structures and a remarkable trigger-like process anterior to the cloacal aperture in the male.

Mr. Foster presented a paper entitled The Use of Vermifuges in the Treatment of Swine. He finds *oleum chenopodii* very satisfactory, comparing very favorably with *santonin*. Coal tar creosote was not found to be satisfactory.

Mr. Hall presented a paper entitled A Note on *Syngamus laryngeus* from Cattle and Carabao in the Philippine Islands. This paper records the parasite for the first time since its description by Railliet from Annam.

Mr. Hall also presented a note on the ingestion of ascarids by man. An employee of one of the big packing houses in Chicago, a so-called "Polack," working at the gutting bench in the hog room, was in the habit, according to Dr. Woodruff of the U. S. Bureau of Animal Industry, of slitting open the intestines of hogs, where they could be seen distended with *Ascaris suum*, taking a handful of these worms and eating them down in several bites. Dr. Woodruff states that the man showed no visible evidence of ill effects from this habit, which is rather remarkable, as, aside from the esthetic repugnance which would be sufficient to make the average person sick, ascarids have certain toxins which often affect helminthologists unpleasantly on merely working with these worms, some persons developing a hypersusceptibility which makes the presence of the worms in the same room intolerable. The case must be regarded as an individual idiosyncrasy, suggestive of mental defects, physiological disturbances, or some such pathological condition. In this connection it may be noted that all reports that the inhabitants of any section of Italy are in the habit of eating ligules have met with strong and indignant denials on the part of the Italian helminthologists.

Dr. Stiles gave a talk on sanitary conditions in the southern United States, emphasizing the good effects to be anticipated in dealing with problems of this sort in a quiet, personal way and avoiding unpleasant, undesired, and unmerited newspaper notoriety.

Dr. Pfender gave a very instructive demonstration of the use of radiography, illustrating his points by stereoscopic radiographs and the use of the fluoroscope.

MAURICE C. HALL, *Secretary*.

The twenty-fourth regular meeting of the society was held at the residence of Mr. Chambers on Jan. 28, 1915, Mr. Chambers acting as host and Dr. Cobb as chairman.

Dr. Stiles gave an extended discussion of sanitary conditions in the South, with especial reference to the respective merits of the pit privy and the so-called "umbrella privy".

Mr. Chambers exhibited a figure of a new free-living nematode from Panama, the worm being provided with three jaws, each of which is armed with three rows of retrorse teeth.

Dr. Cobb exhibited a Baker collapsible microscope.

The secretary presented a note by Mr. Crawley in regard to the protozoa found in the cloaca of frogs, with special reference to variations in *Opalina*.

MAURICE C. HALL, *Secretary*.